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This document will be released to **NATO**.

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EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



EUROPEAN UNION
MILITARY STAFF

Brussels, 30 March 2012

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Delegations will find attached the document EEAS 00489/12, EU Military Lessons Learned (LL) Concept. This document supersedes document EUMS 8562/11, dated 1 July 2011, which was agreed by the EUMC on 30 June 2011.

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EUROPEAN UNION
MILITARY LESSONS LEARNED CONCEPT

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REFERENCES

- A. Council Decision 2008/298/CFSP of 7 April 2008 - European Union Military Staff Terms of Reference and Organisation.
- B. ST 15812/07 dated 27 November 2007- Lessons - Reporting Process.
- C. ST 8961/11 dated 12 April 2011 - The EUMC Strategic Plan 2011.
- D. ST 7491/08 dated 11 March 2008 - Framework for EU Military Conceptual Documents.
- E. CON/CAP 8336/10 dated 11 August 2010 - EUMS Food for Thought Paper -Developing the Utility of the EU Military Lessons Learned process.
- F. DG 11731/10 dated 19 November 2010 - EUMS Lessons Report for the period June - November 2010.
- G. ST 6318/1/11 REV 1 dated 21 February 2011 - Promoting Synergies between EU Civil and Military Capability Development - Intermediate report on the outcomes of Phase 2 of the Workplan.
- H. ST 9850/11 dated 17 May 2011 - Promoting Synergies between EU Civil and Military Capability Development Final report on the outcomes of Phase 2 Workplan.
- I. ST 6579/11 dated 16 February 2011 - EU Military Concept Development Implementation programme 2011-2012.
- J. CON/CAP 11476/2/10 REV 2 dated 26 November 2010 - 2010 Revision of the CDP Strand D Methodology.
- K. ST 9592/11 dated 2 May 2011 - Promoting Synergies between EU civil and Military Capability Development - Establishment of a Shared Civilian and Military Lessons Database.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. One of the tasks stated under the EUMS Terms of Reference and Organisation (Reference A) is to 'contribute to the necessary lessons learned process'. The development of lessons from CSDP military operations and exercises will continue to be an essential part of improving and extending the EU capability. Additionally, the provision of EU military lessons must play a role in defining future capability requirements and concept development.
2. The current EUMS Lessons Learned Process (ELPRO) was agreed by the EUMC on 26 November 2007 as noted under Reference B. Since then this process, supported by the Council General Secretariat (DGA V) software database tool (EUMS Lessons Management Application - ELMA), has captured lessons from a variety of EU CSDP Military Operations and Exercises. In recent years progress has been made in the collection, management and development of military lessons. However, there have been increasing and justifiable calls to further develop the utility of the lessons process and specifically to link the process more directly both to related EU projects and, as part of the Comprehensive Approach, to other EU instruments in the Foreign and Security Policy domain and the European Defence Agency (EDA).
3. Additionally, the requirement for development of lessons processes is underpinned both in the EUMC Strategic Plan (Reference C) and under the, PSC agreed, framework of Promoting Synergies between EU Civil and Military Capability Development (References G and H). The latter project includes the important initiatives to develop both a shared civilian-military lessons database and common civilian-military lessons reporting procedures. This concept paper will contribute significantly to supporting both the EUMC key action and the civilian-military synergies project by promotion of the EU Military LL processes, whilst simultaneously contributing to the Comprehensive Approach by enhancing wider LL development across the EU.

B. AIM

4. This document provides an overarching concept, the core of which is a revised process which describes how EU military lessons (and, where appropriate, civilian lessons) can be learned, in order to develop and improve the military contribution to CSDP.

C. SCOPE

5. The document will outline the key areas to which the concept will contribute and support. It will highlight both the important factors which need to be considered when collating and developing lesson observations and the linkages which must be developed and maintained between the process and associated EU projects. Lastly, it will provide details of a revised mechanism which draws together the key inter-connecting elements into one overarching, efficient and intuitive process in order to develop lesson observations from CSDP activities into lessons identified and finally into lessons learned. In accordance with the Framework for EU Military Conceptual documents (Reference D) this concept will facilitate connectivity with other CSDP crisis management principles and measures.

D. KEY WORKING TERMS

6. In the context of this concept the following definitions apply:
 - a. Lesson Observation - Any occurrence(s) or finding(s) that could have an impact on EU operational output and has the potential to become a Lesson Learned. It might require an improvement or it can constitute a Best Practice.¹
 - b. Lesson Identified - A statement (based on a verified Lesson Observation) defining the detailed nature of the problem for which remedial action has to be developed - it is the outcome of the analysis phase.
 - c. Lesson Learned - A lesson that has been fully staffed and the associated improvement and implementation action(s) identified and taken. A lesson can only be declared 'learned' once the full remedial action has been successfully implemented.
 - d. Best Practice - Best Practice is an activity which conventional wisdom regards as more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique.

¹ A Lesson Observation is:

- a problem that is not resolvable by the employment of current concepts, tactics, procedures, equipment or training;
- NOT a report of failure to follow relevant concepts, tactics or procedures.
- a statement of a specific or one-off fact or occurrence, or a statement of accumulated experiences over time.

E. LESSONS LEARNED - AREAS FOR IMPACT

7. The concept and supporting process are focused to impact in the following key areas, which are not prioritised:
 - a. To contribute to the development of the Comprehensive Approach in the EU.
 - b. To contribute towards the improved planning and execution of current and future CSDP activities.
 - c. To support EU Capability Development in general and the Capability Development Plan in particular.
 - d. To contribute towards EU concept development.
 - e. To contribute to the development of EU Standard Operating Procedures.
 - f. Where appropriate, to facilitate LL information sharing between EU bodies, MS and, *inter alia*, appropriate international organisations.

F. PRINCIPLES FOR ACHIEVING AN EFFECTIVE LESSONS LEARNED ORGANISATION

8. An effective LL organisation is underpinned by the following principles:
 - a. Effective leadership. Leadership direction, engagement and support are the cornerstones of an effective LL process. Leadership direction and engagement should result in articulation of the lesson collection priorities, allocation of resources and tasking of specific bodies. Leadership support can create incentives, particularly when combined with (pro-actively) sharing lessons and can demonstrate an organisation's value by exploiting the LL capability. In terms of the ELPRO, and the EUMC's role in this regard, direction and guidance will be sought.

- b. Committed stakeholder involvement. LL can be a real driver for improvement across many areas, but only if there is demonstrable commitment applied across all levels. Cooperation, coordination and communication are key elements required by stakeholders to add real value to the process and committed involvement is essential. This is particularly true when endorsing lesson observations; developing action plans for remedial actions; overseeing action-plans through to the implementation of lessons learned; and regularly updating the database, thereby making optimum use of the ELMA real-time capability for all actors within EU having access to the database.
- c. Quality information assurances. The ELMA software database is a web-based, secure intranet, available through the EU OPS WAN which is used to facilitate the collection, storing, management, development and dissemination of EU military lessons; it is the lynchpin of the EU military LL process. The system is versatile and intuitive and acts as a 'pool' of corporate knowledge from which to draw on for a variety of purposes. The data contained within it is, however, only as good as the information supplied to it by individuals and organisations. There must therefore be qualitative rigour applied to all the information uploaded to ELMA and in particular to the rigorous verification of all lessons observations and endorsement of lessons identified, which set the benchmark for downstream lessons implementation action.
- d. Robust LL structures at OHQ/FHQ level. The activated OHQs/FHQs have a pivotal role to play in the production and collation of both properly verified lesson observations and endorsed lessons identified, as well as the implementation of LL. However, it has been shown that due to a range of factors, principally the temporary nature of the EU activated OHQ/FHQs and the frequent rotation of personnel, this is not always achieved to the maximum extent. There is therefore a requirement for military-strategic and operational level HQs¹ to develop and maintain durable and enduring LL structures that are able to immediately support the launching of an operation and to withstand the recurrent staff rotations. An overall lessons culture must be engendered, to make it part of routine business and to adopt a 'lessons-cycle' of which all stakeholders are aware of and can effectively contribute towards.

¹ The FHQs will have the primary responsibility for the collection of appropriate tactical level lesson observations.

- e. Appropriate level of lesson observations. Given the wide-range of key areas that the process aims to contribute towards, it follows that the collection of lesson observations across the spectrum of levels (tactical, operational and military/politico-strategic) should be equally broad. The CSDP Lessons and Best Practices Portal and particularly the military element in ELMA, should be viewed as a reservoir of knowledge that could be pulled and/or pushed, through information sharing, in order to support a range of differing activities. Careful consideration will therefore be required not to initially disregard lessons observations which, although not obviously relevant in a particular niche area, may have wider implications for other domains. That said, chain of command responsibilities must be respected and maintained and there may be occasions when Command Groups/Lessons Management Groups (LMG) (or their equivalent) determine that the specifics of a particular lesson observation requires development at the OHQ/FHQ level only, and will therefore not necessarily warrant inclusion into the wider database.
- f. Capturing Best Practices. Best practices can be considered as the most efficient (least amount of effort) and effective (best results) way of accomplishing a task, based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time and as a method by which to replicate desired outcomes. The use of best practices has clear linkages with LL processes to the extent that we can learn as much from the events which we get right as by those where there are shortfalls¹. These should therefore be made available for others to draw on, as required, through the LL database.

¹ The use of shipping industry 'best management practices' has been one of the cornerstones for combating piracy as part of CSDP Operation Atalanta.

- g. Transparency and LL sharing. *Inter alia*, LL are created to reduce the waste of resources by eliminating duplication of effort; to benefit from collective wisdom and to create new knowledge as a benefit of the sharing process, therefore LLs contribute to gain a competitive advantage in challenging new environments. This can only be achieved by being transparent and candid in the articulation of lesson observations, which requires a step-change in culture. The nature of some lessons is frequently linked to difficult (political), sensitive and often re-occurring issues, which may require cross-agency solutions. Moreover, effective trend analysis can only be properly achieved through broad exchange of quality information. The EU military community should (wherever possible and ensuring reciprocity and inclusiveness are preserved) continue to encourage and facilitate improvements to exchange lessons and best practices from within and outside the EU.

G. LINKAGES WITH RELATED EU PROJECTS

9. The EU Military LL output has specific linkages with a number of EU related projects as detailed below:
- a. Capability Development Plan (CDP). The LL database provides an important source of information for the CDP and recent ELMA technical upgrades have further enhanced its utility in this regard¹. Planned expansion of the database includes shared access to EU civilian CSDP lessons and the provision of a document library to include LL reports from non-CSDP activity originating from other EU bodies, as well as non EU-specific reports from MS, Third Parties and other international organisations. These initiatives will broaden and deepen the availability of relevant data and provide significant additional information from which CDP stakeholders can draw upon to inform their work; this will be particularly beneficial to the ongoing CDP Strand D work (see Reference I) and the European Defence Agency.

¹ This includes the introduction of mandatory fields to improve the overall depth of the lessons observations and specifically to more clearly articulate the operational impact of specific observations.

- b. Concept Development Implementation Programme (CDIP). Closely allied to the capability development process are concepts, which are considered a key element. An efficient LL process should clarify the extent to which any conceptual work might be necessary for particular lessons to be learned and the process can only be complete once all the developmental aspects have been resolved, including the writing or revision of associated concepts. Quality lessons identified should act as a driver for concept development and provide a rich source of information (gained from operational experiences) which should be central for development of the key and supporting military concepts contained within the CDIP.
- c. Civilian-Military LL Synergies. In order to effectively contribute to the EU's Comprehensive Approach, through the provision of a quality CSDP lessons output, there must be a well defined and symbiotic relationship between the civilian and military domains. Synergies in this area will improve the transparency between civilian and military lessons and result in a more coherent approach to developing, resolving and implementing common lessons and developing EU Best practices for the Comprehensive Approach¹. Specifically, the introduction of a shared civilian-military database to manage, develop and implement lessons, will increase the awareness and understanding of lessons within each area and assist in common trend analysis. Additionally, combining the lessons reporting processes may help to support combined and integrated planning for CSDP missions and operations and contribute to learning lessons, both common and individual, from CSDP activities which can be distributed widely to all relevant EU stakeholders.
- d. Incorporating LL into CSDP Planning and Conduct of Activities. Within the framework of planning for future CSDP activities, it is paramount that relevant lessons are utilised practically in the planning process, to avoid repeating mistakes, and robust mechanisms should be in place within the planning (and conduct) process to achieve this. This includes the advanced incorporation of EU military lessons by the OHQ/FHQ staff. Additionally, within the EUMS, the nomination of appropriate individuals to act as LL coordinators who are embedded into the Core/Enhanced Planning Teams and the Mission Monitoring Teams to (*inter alia*) provide previous relevant LL for the planning process, and to collate and manage the lessons originating from ongoing operations.

¹ Parallel work in this area is ongoing through Promoting Synergies between EU Civil and Military Capability Development - References G and H.

H. THE EU MILITARY LESSONS LEARNED PROCESS (ELPRO)

10. Successful LL structures and organisations have at their core the *cognitive hierarchy* model which, in simple terms, is derived from the inter-connecting relations between Data, Information, Knowledge (both explicit and tacit¹) and Understanding, represented in Figure 1.

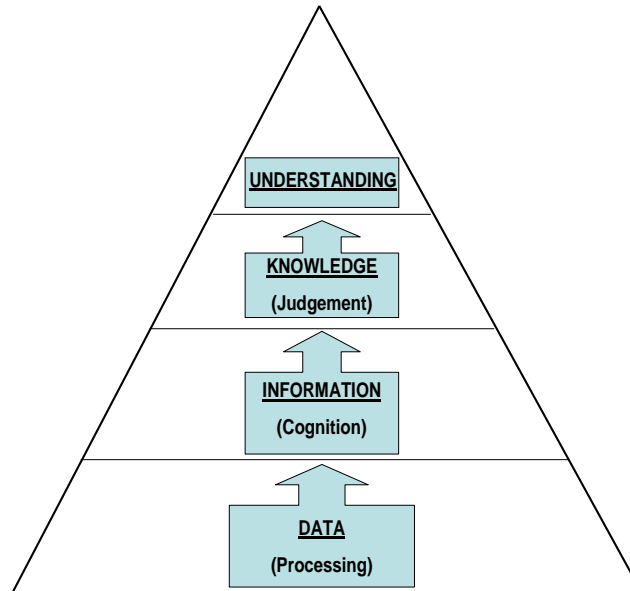


Figure 1. The Cognitive Hierarchy Model.

11. When further broken down to its constituent parts for the purpose of elaborating a sustainable LL structure, the relationship can be summarised as follows:

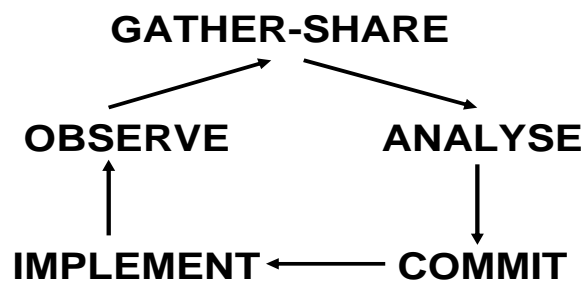


Figure 2. EU Lessons Learned Cycle

¹ Explicit knowledge is objective and can be captured and stored for development; tacit knowledge is more subjective and is based on intuition.

12. This basic structural paradigm (highlighted above) acts as the foundation for the overall EU military LL process, which is represented in its entirety in Figure 3 below.

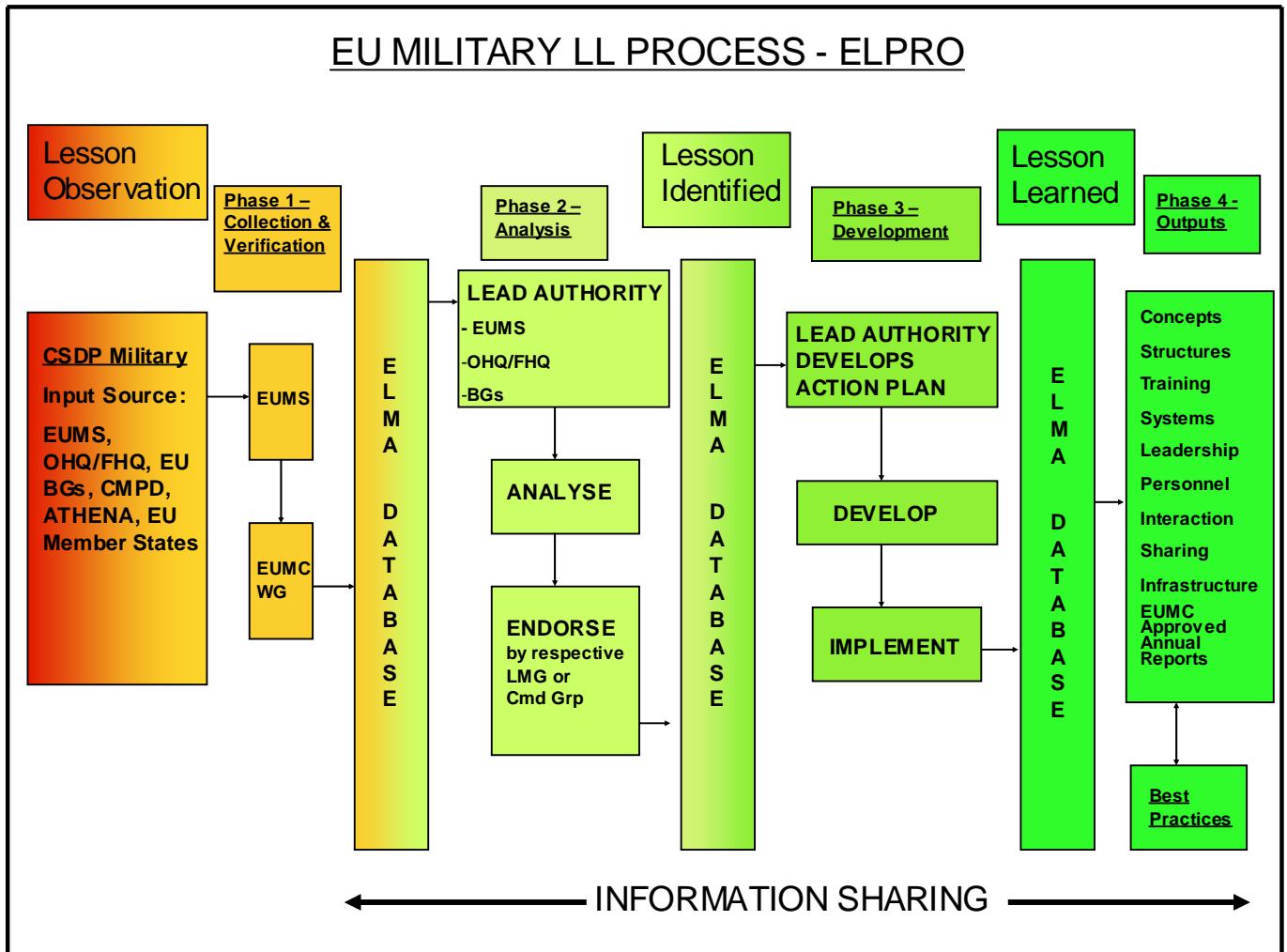


Figure 3. EU Military LL Process

13. ELPRO aims to develop lessons observations from CSDP activities which are initiated by EU actors. Lessons Observations from appropriate EU actors may be supplied for possible incorporation into the ELPRO itself, as outlined below. ELPRO is focused on 4 Phases: Collection and Verification; Analysis; Development; and Outputs. Each of these phases is linked directly to Lessons Observations, Lessons Identified and Lessons Learned. In order to fully understand the causal relationships between each of these categories it is necessary to provide more detail.¹

¹ Once this concept has been formally agreed a review of existing LL Standard Operating Procedures will be undertaken to provide additional detail as appropriate.

a. Phase 1 - Collection and Verification/Lessons Observations.

Lessons Observations are the building blocks of the LL process, they must be applicable (originate from and have an effect on CSDP activities), objective (based on fact) and clearly articulated. In order to achieve this it is vital that observation collection processes across all levels are easily accessible, intuitive and efficient; they must allow for the collection of both raw and mature¹ observations. For military CSDP activities the lessons observations will generally originate from those EU actors most closely associated with specific CSDP activities, including, but not limited to: EUMS, OHQs, FHQs, EU Battle Groups, CMPD, ATHENA and EU Member States². Before lessons observations are uploaded into ELMA, it is vital that there is a rigorous verification of individual observations, for reasons of quality assurance and to ensure that the observation is rational and does not duplicate *operation-specific* observations which are already included within the database. To this end, relevant EU actors are to forward lesson observations to the EUMS LL Cell for collection and initial verification. Thereafter, the lessons observations will be periodically provided to the EUMC WG for final verification before being uploaded into ELMA. To ensure maximum flexibility, the periodic provision of the lessons observations to the EUMC WG will be driven by military activity requirements, rather than rigid pre-designated timings. In broad terms this means that lessons observations could be provided to the EUMC WG on the following occasions: at the end of any significant military planning activity; on completion of a specific phase of an EU military operation; on completion of an EU military operation or at any other appropriate occasion not included within the categories above.

¹ Raw Observation: an observation which requires further study or analysis to fully understand the root causes. Mature Observation: an observation for which there is already data available regarding the root causes and thus may require no analysis.

² Inputs may also be received from EEAS Management Directorates regarding military CSDP related activity.

b. Phase 2 - Analysis/Lessons Identified.

Once the lesson observation has been finally verified it can then be uploaded into the database. Within the respective management levels¹, designated in ELMA, a lead authority (Directorate/Division/Branch) will be assigned to lead on the analysis of the observation in order to define the lesson identified. This analysis is a crucial element of the process and must result in establishing the origin of the problem which has been highlighted through the lesson observation. There are a range of analysis techniques which might be adopted according to the specifics of individual observations. Collection of data (quantitative and/or qualitative) which relates to the observation may be required through document reviews, surveys and interviews. This data will then need to be categorised, possibly by linking with lines of development, to assist in determining the root cause of the problem and possible solutions (to include consideration of best practices); all of which will contribute to defining the lesson identified. Following the completion of the analysis the respective lead authority must endorse the lesson identified prior to its inclusion into ELMA.

c. Phase 3 - Development/Lessons Learned.

Following Phase 2, the lead authority will be required to develop an action plan to effect the change required to implement the lesson identified into a fully resolved lesson learned. This remedial action will require a number of key elements, including leadership endorsement, stakeholder commitment, appropriate resource allocation and tasking authorisation. Implementation may include one or more action bodies completing a wide variety of activities. To guide remedial action activities, the lead authority may need to action a plan that includes consideration of: remedial actions across the lines of development; required resources (finance, personnel, tools); timelines (milestones – near, mid, long); and, where appropriate, recommended validation techniques.

¹ For this purpose management levels includes; EUMS, OHQs, FHQs and EU Battle Groups.

d. Phase 4 - Outputs/Lessons Learned.

On completion of the development action the lesson cycle can only be complete once the lesson identified is implemented and becomes a lesson learned. From this point various outputs may be required along the lines of development outlined in Figure 3.

I. OVERALL RESPONSIBILITIES

14. Overall responsibilities within the LL process are as follows:

- a. DG EUMS - Overall responsibility for the effective management of the EU Military LL Process.
- b. DDG EUMS - Overall responsibility for the effective implementation of the EU Military LL Process.
- c. EUMS Lessons Management Group (LMG) - Director-level management group, chaired by the Deputy Director General, responsible for endorsement of lessons identified and of the development of action plans and prioritisation of resources for implementing actions.
- d. EUMS LL Cell - Specific responsibility for the collection, management and development of lessons from CSDP military activities and of the wider development of LL processes inside the EU military community and also with civilian bodies across the EU.
- e. EUMS - As instructed by EUMS Directors, provide specialist functional area advice and input to ELPRO and, where appropriate, manage the overall development of specific lessons observations to ensure remedial actions are completed and that lessons become learned.
- f. Operational/Force Commanders - Responsible for the provision of lesson observations as directed, and for establishing and maintaining robust LL organisations within their respective HQs through Command Groups/Lessons Management Groups (or equivalent) as appropriate.
- g. EUMC -Responsible for final verification of the lessons observations and for the approval of the annual common (civilian-military) CSDP LL Report.

- h. EU Member States - Responsible for providing lessons observations of interest to CSDP.

J. THE EU MILITARY LESSONS LEARNED CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

- 15. In specific terms the process will contribute to the Comprehensive Approach in the following areas:

- a. Lessons Learned Reporting Procedures.

It is anticipated that the cornerstone for LL reporting will be the annual, comprehensive LL and common (civilian-military) report to the PSC/Council, this report will be staffed in parallel with EU civilian counterparts. The EUMC, will have a key role to play in the development of this document, which will allow the broad parameters or themes of the EUMC capability development priorities, within the lessons framework, to be set out and thus direct and guide future development of the most significant lessons identified. Additionally, as part of the Comprehensive Approach, other common thematic LL reports (which may necessitate military input) may be initiated on an as required basis. The provision of separate, periodic military reports to the EUMC may continue and will be complementary to the annual common (civ-mil) report.

b. The CSDP Lessons and Best Practices Portal.

All data relating to CSDP LL activities (both military and civilian) will be contained within the CSDP Lessons and Best Practices Portal - see Figure 4 and Reference K. This web-based application available through the EU OPS WAN will include (read only) access¹ to those individuals provided with appropriate accreditation². Through the portal users will have access to both the military (ELMA) and civilian (Civilian Lessons Management Application - CiLMA) LL data, which will incorporate all the information relating to the collection, analysis and development of individual lessons. In addition, a document library and a forum facility will be made available through the portal. The document library will act as a depository for a wide range of LL reports from EU actors (particularly MS) and non-EU contributors on EU-CSDP, EU non-CSDP and non-EU activities. The intention is to create a library of useful LL and best practices information from which EU bodies can refer to in order to inform their work. The portal will include a *wiki* feature which will consist of a series of interconnecting thematic hyperlinks, which will provide a network of information between relevant areas and greatly facilitate lessons sharing among the CSDP portal users. The portal will also contain search facilities for individual civilian or military lessons and those combined lessons which are relevant in both domains.

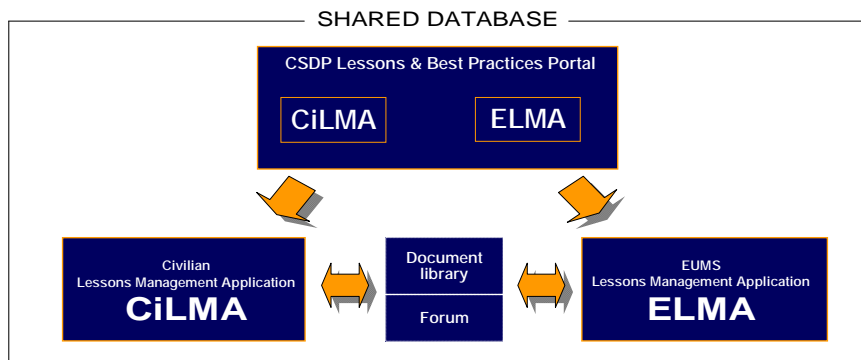


Figure 4. CSDP Lessons and Best Practices Portal

¹ Permissions will be given to key stakeholders for write access to the portal.

² This is arranged through DGA V.